

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 725

By Crowe

A RESOLUTION to honor Linda O'Neal on the occasion of her retirement from the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth.

WHEREAS, this General Assembly takes great pleasure in paying tribute to a public servant who has devoted her entire career to protecting this State's most precious resource: our children; and

WHEREAS, since 1988, Linda O'Neal has served with distinction as the executive director of the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY), working with purpose and conviction to improve the quality of life for Tennessee's children and families and provide leadership for other children's advocates; and

WHEREAS, as executive director for TCCY, Linda O'Neal chairs the Youth Transitions Advisory Council, co-chairs the Council on Children's Mental Health, and serves with several other groups dedicated to enhancing the welfare and safety of children; she is a member of Building Strong Brains Tennessee Coordinating Team, guiding implementation of the effort; and

WHEREAS, after beginning her career working with children in foster care, she was involved in juvenile justice system advocacy with the Tennessee Law Enforcement Planning Agency and as executive director of the Institute for Children's Resources; and

WHEREAS, Ms. O'Neal's groundbreaking work has influenced countless efforts on behalf of children, including the creation of the Department of Children's Services, the Multiple Response System, Coordinated School Health, Resource Mapping for Children, and the Second Look Commission; and

WHEREAS, immediately prior to coming to TCCY, Linda O'Neal was employed by the Tennessee Alliance for Legal Services, where she provided legislative and administrative

advocacy on behalf of low-income people, and she chaired a statewide task force on children in foster care; and

WHEREAS, Ms. O'Neal has served on the board of directors for Tennessee Voices for Children, United Ways of Tennessee, Tennessee Alliance of Legal Services, Tennessee Conference on Social Welfare, serving as president from 1995-1996, Metro Action Commission, Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee, and the inaugural Annie E. Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT Steering Committee and currently serves on the board of directors for the FrameWorks Institute; and

WHEREAS, Linda O'Neal is a licensed attorney with a J.D. from the Nashville School of Law, where she was inducted into Cooper's Inn; she also has a Bachelor of Science degree in History, cum laude, from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville and a master's degree in public administration from a joint University of Tennessee-Middle Tennessee State University program; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to awards and accolades, Ms. O'Neal has received national, Southeast regional, State, and local recognition for her work in children's services and juvenile justice advocacy; and

WHEREAS, in addition to her many professional endeavors, she also served as a Girl Scout leader for thirteen years; and

WHEREAS, her many accomplishments aside, Linda O'Neal is most grateful for the love, respect, and companionship she shares with her husband of forty-five years, Michael O'Neal, a long-time state employee who retired from the Department of Personnel and continues his service to the State at the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services; their daughter, Sarah Flanigen, who is a nurse practitioner, and son-in-law, Paul Flanigen, who is an experimental pilot with the United States Army; and their grandsons, Hank and Jay Flanigen; and

WHEREAS, after answering the tantalizing call of retirement, she plans to continue traveling around the world with her husband; and

WHEREAS, few State employees have given so generously of themselves in securing a brighter future for our children and families, and Linda O'Neal is most deserving of our approbation upon having achieved this milestone; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor Linda O'Neal on the occasion of her retirement as executive director of the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth, thank her for thirty years of compassionate and expert service to the Commission, and extend to her our best wishes for much continued happiness and success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.